



Maryland  
Hospital Association

March 21, 2023

To: The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 949 - Criminal Injuries Compensation Board - Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 949.

Across the state, hospital-based sexual assault forensic exam ([SAFE](#)) programs employ forensic nurse examiners. These registered nurses receive special training in evidence collection and are experts in delivering trauma-informed care to survivors of violence and abuse. State law ensures survivors of sexual assault have access to emergency medical treatment for their injuries and do not incur any out-of-pocket expenses.

Hospitals care for survivors of all forms of violence, but there are gaps in the state's reimbursement criteria. Health care for survivors of nonfatal strangulation that did not result from rape, sexual offense, or sexual abuse is not reimbursable. SB 949 would close this gap by allowing health care expenses related to nonfatal strangulation to be reimbursed.

Several Maryland hospitals that operate forensic medical units offered training in their communities on how to prevent and respond to victims of nonfatal strangulation. New technology can accurately document evidence of strangulation. For example, an "alternative light source" can detect fingerprints left on a victim's neck.

SB 949 would support the work hospitals are doing to serve their communities and support survivors of all forms of violence and abuse.

For these reasons, we ask for a *favorable* report on SB 949.

For more information, please contact:

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